



Discussion Guide — 11/30/2025

Series: *Around the Manger: Stories of Advent*

Message: *Mary's Story*

Scripture: Luke 1:26-38 (NRSVUE)

Opening Prayer

God of holy interruptions, You draw near to ordinary people and speak courageous yes's into our fear. Open our ears to Your word, our hearts to Your Spirit, and our lives to Your purposes. As we ponder Mary's story, form Christ in us for the sake of the world You love. In Jesus' name, amen.

Introduction & Context

Mary's story begins in Nazareth—an unimportant place—where God announces a history-bending plan through an unassuming teenager. The angel's message ("Do not be afraid... the Lord is with you") meets real questions ("How can this be?") and culminates in a faithful response ("Let it be with me according to your word"). Mary's surrender is not passive resignation; it is courageous consent. Her "yes" becomes the doorway through which God's salvation enters the world. As with Mary, grace initiates; faith responds; and community (Elizabeth, Joseph, the faithful) sustains.

Scripture

Read aloud the primary passage(s) from the sermon (e.g., Luke 1:26–38; 39–45; 46–55).

Listen for repeated words and movements: greeting → fear → promise → question → assurance → consent → praise.

Discussion Questions

1. "The Lord is with you" (Presence before instruction)

- Where do you most need to hear "The Lord is with you" right now?
- How does God's presence change how you hear a hard or holy assignment?

2. "How can this be?" (Holy questions)

- Mary's first move is an honest question. What honest question are you carrying into Advent?
- What helps you bring questions to God without shame?





3. “Let it be...” (Courageous consent)

- What’s the difference between passive resignation and Mary’s faithful consent?
- Where might God be inviting your “yes” in this season (habits, relationships, generosity, service)?

4. Elizabeth’s blessing (Community that confirms calling)

- Who has played the “Elizabeth” role for you—naming God’s work in you when you were unsure?
- What is one practical way our group/church can be that kind of confirming community for someone this month?

5. Magnificat (Reordered hopes)

Read Luke 1:46–55 (if not already read).

- What do you notice about God’s priorities (the lowly lifted, the hungry filled, the proud scattered)?
- Which line of Mary’s song most challenges or encourages you—and why?

6. Practicing Mary’s posture (Advent rhythms)

- Which practice helps you live Mary’s posture of presence, courage, and praise: silence, Scripture meditation, simple hospitality, or generous giving?
- What small, concrete rhythm could you adopt this week?

Closing Prayer

Holy God, as You overshadowed Mary by Your Spirit, overshadow us. Where we are afraid, speak peace. Where we are stubborn, soften us. Where we are weary, strengthen us. Let Christ be formed in us so that our neighbors may see Your light. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Key Takeaway

Mary’s courageous “yes” to God—held within a confirming community—becomes the channel through which God’s saving work flows; the same grace invites our faithful consent today.



Next Step — P.A.R. (Pray • Act • Reflect)

Pray: “Lord, be with me here. Show me one concrete place to say a faithful ‘yes’ this week.” Sit in silence; write what comes.

Act: Do one small act that embodies your “yes” (a call, a note, a gift, an hour of service, a carved-out time of prayer/Scripture). Tell an “Elizabeth” in your life so they can bless and encourage you.

Reflect: At week’s end, ask: Where did I sense fear? Where did I experience God’s presence and confirmation? What will I keep practicing so Christ is formed in me?

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